

**SECRET.**

**DELHI RECORDS.**

**3**

**1916.**

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.  
HOME DEPARTMENT.**

**POLITICAL—A.**

**Proceedings, April 1916, nos. 89—91.**

**Proposed deputation of Mr. D. Petrie as Intelligence Officer for the Far East in connection with sedition.**

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**PREVIOUS REFERENCES.**

Political A., February 1916, nos. 496—514.  
B., October 1915, nos. 369—374.  
B., September 1915, no. 52.  
B., July 1915, no. 270.  
A., June 1914, nos. 121—25.

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**LATER REFERENCES.**

SECRET.

# NOTES.

POLITICAL A., APRIL 1916.

Nos. 89—91.

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## PROPOSED DEPUTATION OF MR. D. PETRIE AS INTELLIGENCE OFFICER FOR THE FAR EAST IN CONNECTION WITH SEDITION.

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TELEGRAM FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE, DATED THE 23RD MARCH 1916.

Pro. no. 89.

For orders.

A. L.,—25-3-16.

I have spoken to Sir C. Cleveland and Hon'ble Member about this telegram, which the former should now see in order that he may note his views after discussion with Mr. Petrie.

H. WHEELER,—25-3-16.

Director, Criminal Intelligence.

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I have no difficulty in accepting the reservations imposed by the Secretary of State up till the point where he says I ought not to start local organisations. I imagine that this veto is due to a serious misconception of the whole position. In most of the places where I proposed locating agents the local officers cannot command suitable agents, nor have they the funds to pay them. In the cases of Shanghai, Bangkok, and more recently of Singapore, we have been asked to supply considerable sums of secret service money, and I remember that when the first remittance to Bangkok was sanctioned, His Excellency the Viceroy said that the Foreign Office could not be expected to provide funds for agents employed exclusively in the interests of India. Does either the Foreign Office or Colonial Office now contemplate providing their officers in the Far East with suitable sums of secret service money? I hardly think so. Then if India pays, is it not reasonable that I should be empowered to see that the agents entertained are used to obtain intelligence which is of importance to India? Again, one of the chief reasons for creating this appointment is that local officers themselves have admitted that they understand so little of Indians and Indian conditions that they are quite unable to watch or to understand seditious developments which arise. If such special knowledge as I possess is not to be utilised in this direction, my deputation is hardly worth while. My own idea was that my agents would work in direct touch with local officers who, in the light of the information obtained, would be the better able to understand and deal with problems arising out of the presence of Indians within their jurisdictions. Admittedly suitable local agents have not been procurable so far, and the only solution appears to be that I should maintain men of my own who, I am satisfied, are capable of doing what is expected of them. This point of agents is a vital one, and unless it is conceded, the practical benefits arising out of the appointment will be rendered largely nugatory.

There is no question of impairing the authority of the General Officer Commanding, Singapore, with whom I have already established the *modus vivendi*.

I am willing to keep away from Japan until I have consulted the British Representative, although the fact that Rash Bihari Bose was there for months before his presence was discovered shows that Japan would be all the better for outside assistance.

I am disappointed at the decision to exclude me from America, because I feel that it starts me with a somewhat unfair handicap. The current of revolutionary activity runs from America to the Far East, and I if am expected to stem it, I should not be denied access to its source. I believe, too, that the many recent statements made by returned emigrants place our knowledge of the Indian revolutionary movement in America far ahead of what is known in England. I hold, therefore, that we are in a better position to deal with America. If, however, it is thought better not to press this point, I am prepared to give the system proposed a fair trial.

I fear that again in the matter of title the reasons for the proposal have been misunderstood. By all means show me in the lists as "on special duty." The title was meant to be a *prima facie* explanation of my presence among the limited British communities in many of the places

I would have to visit, and if I were given a quasi-consular position and title it would obviate many difficulties in my visiting foreign territory. I dislike the title "Intelligence Officer." I feel certain that the coupling of my name with this title would, in the case of men like Rash Behari Bose, Bhagwan Singh, and Ram Chand of the *Ghadr*, simply mean a gratuitous exposure of our hand. The title proposed was suggested by Mr. Dering at Bangkok, who appreciates the practical needs of my position and I think a title of some sort would be a great advantage.

Lastly there is the question of Singapore. I am opposed to fixing definitely on Singapore until I know where my natural centre of gravity would lie. Personally if I had to fix on any one place as headquarters, I should put it somewhere closer to the China coast, which is by far the most important area with which I am to be concerned. I do not quite understand what is meant by my making "arrangements at Singapore for necessary distribution by local authorities of all information received." Naturally all information sent telegraphically would go through the Singapore authorities, but surely I am not expected to conduct all my ordinary correspondence through the Singapore Government even on questions (and there must be many such) in which

See also Hon'ble Member's note of 15th February 1916: Political A., February 1916, nos. 496-514. they are not even remotely interested? Such a decision would virtually make me subordinate to

Singapore and not to India, although it is India that is paying for me. I recognise that I am to be an intelligence and not an investigating officer, but for reasons I have already given I should be entitled to say what inquiries, in my opinion, require to be taken up.

'/ The modifications I suggest are all made in the light of my experience in the Far East. I found no difficulty then in establishing a practical and mutually satisfactory system of relations. All that I ask is to be given a free hand to do this again, and I am confident that I shall find no difficulty in meeting half-way any wishes on the part of local officers. Meanwhile it will be inadvisable for me to do anything until the question of agents is decided.

D. PETRIE,—28-3-16.

I agree after discussion with Mr. Petrie and submit a draft telegram to Secretary of State for consideration in Home Department.

Home Dept.

C. R. CLEVELAND,—30-3-16.

As the result of discussion to-day with Hon'ble Member Sir C. Cleveland and Mr. Petrie I have revised the Director's draft somewhat, while preserving its substance, and submit for approval.

We need scarcely trouble His Excellency with these details on the eve of his departure.

H. WHEELER,—30-3-16.

Many thanks. We agree to so little that I would merely ask the Secretary of State to

Done.

H. WHEELER.

consider the following further representations on the subject of Petrie's mission. We might also say that we propose communicating separately with him regarding Japan.

R. H. CRADDOCK,—30-3-16.

Pro. no. 90.

TELEGRAM TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE, DATED THE 2ND APRIL 1916.

Draft endorsement to Director, Criminal Intelligence, submitted.

After issue the file may be recorded.

A. L.,—6-4-16.

S. R. HIGNELL,—6-4-16.

Pro. no. 91.

ENDORSEMENT TO THE DIRECTOR, CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE, NO. 1193, DATED THE 8TH APRIL 1916,

Exd. by—M.D.

S19HD

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE

## HOME DEPARTMENT, APRIL 1916.

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Proposed deputation of Mr. Petrie as Intelligence Officer for the Far East in connection with  
sedition. [Pro. nos. 89-90.]

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PROPOSED DEPUTATION OF MR. D. PETRIE AS INTELLIGENCE OFFICER FOR THE FAR  
EAST IN CONNECTION WITH SEDITION.

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Telegram P., dated London, the 23rd March 1916.

Pro. no. 89.

From—The Secretary of State for India,

To—His Excellency the Viceroy (Home Department).

**Intelligence Officer for Far East.** Reference your telegram of the 23rd February. After consultation with other Departments concerned I approve generally your proposals subject to the following remarks. By "unification of control" I understand you to mean that officer selected acts under your direct control as *secret orders* officer between all existing authorities. He should act as adviser to consular or colonial authorities, executive action in British colonies being left entirely to colonial officials. All telegraphing to and from him should be through the official channels. In foreign territory this is necessary for safety and secrecy, and in British territory it will be found more convenient. He should not visit foreign territory without previous consultation with His Majesty's local representative so as to avoid possible trouble with local foreign authorities. Local agents should be controlled locally, and though Petrie's advice as to their selection will doubtless be most useful he ought not to start local organisations of his own. Authority of General Officer Commanding, Singapore, in these matters should not be impaired. Japan presents peculiar difficulties, needing great care, and I doubt whether visit at present is expedient. He must on no account visit the United States or Canada. Existing arrangements there will continue for the present and special officer will be instructed to open communications in the near future with Petrie.

The title suggested seems likely to excite curiosity, and I suggest that Petrie be shown in your lists merely as "on special duty" and be described outside India as intelligence officer. He should make Singapore his headquarters and fixed address, arranging that all communications for him there should be forwarded without delay. He should have office and keep permanent records there. It would be his duty to make arrangements at Singapore for necessary distribution by local authorities there of all information received by him. He should consider himself rather an intelligence than an investigation officer. As recommended in your telegram I agree that India should bear expenditure.

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Telegram P., no. 409, dated the 2nd April 1916.

Pro. no. 90.

From—The Viceroy (Home Department),

To—The Secretary of State for India.

Petrie. Reference your telegram of the 23rd March. We would ask that the following points be considered :

*Firstly*, the great difficulty in the past has been that the local authorities could not find or pay suitable local agents. One of our main objects is that this deficiency should be supplied. We have been asked in the past to pay fairly large sums to local agents and apparently such demands on us will continue. For some of the work Indian Police officers and agents are clearly required, and when Petrie is available they can be far more effectively controlled and employed by him than by local officials. The main basis of Secret Service work are agents, but their work and reports must be supervised and checked by an officer who is expert and acquainted with Indian conditions, otherwise the result is a quantity of loose, unreliable information which cannot be estimated properly at a distance. If Petrie is debarred

PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
HOME DEPARTMENT, APRIL 1916.

Pro. no. 91.) Proposed deputation of Mr. Petrie as Intelligence Officer for the Far East in connection with sedition.

from having his own agents we think he would be wasted and the essential work unperformed and we strongly recommend reconsideration of this point.

*Secondly*, it would be a very serious loss of power, we think, if Petrie were debarred from visiting the United States and Canada, and dealing with intelligence there. These places are the main sources of stream of revolutionists and propaganda in the Far East. If he met your officer there they would probably immediately concert joint measures beneficial to work of both. We venture to doubt the expediency of keeping your officer and Petrie apart, as latter has had very extensive personal experience of *Ghadr* plots and emissaries and could certainly help your officer. We feel strongly that there should be complete combination and co-operation between your officer and Petrie, and separation of their spheres of visits and work will be unsatisfactory.

*Thirdly*, Petrie would merely be shown on our lists as employed under Director, Criminal Intelligence, but helpful if in Far East he had title conveying to local officials nature of duties. Title of Indian Adviser would probably account for his visits to places more satisfactorily than that of Intelligence Officer.

*Fourthly*, until Petrie has had time to look round, we deprecate finally making Singapore headquarters and fixed address as possibly Hong Kong or Shanghai may prove more central and convenient.

*Fifthly*, with reference to arrangements for necessary distribution by local authorities at Singapore of all information received, we think it undesirable for Petrie to send his reports through Singapore authorities to us or to others. We are of opinion that it is essential that he should correspond direct with us and with the local authorities. There will be no question of impairing authority of General Officer Commanding, Singapore, who already understands and approves proposed general lines on which Petrie should work.

Generally, we hope that the scheme may be allowed to develop after consultation between Petrie and local officials without too rigid directions as to details now. We have based our proposals on Petrie's preliminary experience and tentative working, and we feel confident they will be fully approved by local officials in Siam, Malay Federated States, and Singapore, where Petrie has already established very satisfactory relations. Similar result would probably be achieved by him in Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Tokio by visiting those places with concurrence of local officials. We attach great importance to matters of agents and channel of reports. We may address you further hereafter as regards Japan.

Pro. no. 91.

No. 1193, dated Simla, the 8th April 1916.

Endorsed by the Government of India, Home Department.

Telegram to the Secretary of State, dated the 23rd February 1916.

Telegram from the Secretary of State, dated the 23rd March 1916.

Telegram to the Secretary of State, dated the 2nd April 1916.

A copy of the marginally noted papers is forwarded to the Director, Criminal Intelligence, for information, in continuation of the Home Department endorsement no. 28, dated the 7th January 1916.

Exd. by—M.D.  
S19HD

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA**  
**JANPATH, NEW DELHI.**

**Title of Document:—**

Roll A. April 1916 no. 89-91

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